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Implementation of integrated, coherent and coordinated support to South Sudan by the United Nations system

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. Following the independence of South Sudan on 9 July 2011, the Economic and Social Council, through its resolution 2011/43, expressed interest in working with partners in addressing the extensive humanitarian, peacebuilding and development challenges facing the country. The present report is the fifth on South Sudan submitted to the Council since the country's independence.

2. The first report (E/2012/76) outlined the support of the United Nations system to the Government of South Sudan and the transition from emergency relief to development and building of local capacity after the country's independence. The second report (E/2013/73) described the support to and implementation of development and peacebuilding frameworks by the United Nations system and the international community. The third report (E/2014/94) depicted how the outbreak of conflict on 15 December 2013 created a set of dire social, economic, humanitarian, political and security crises and reversed much of the progress made in the first two years of independence. The fourth report (E/2015/74) provided a review of the major developments since July 2014, with a focus on the continuing impact of the conflict on prospects for development.

3. The present report outlines the major developments that have occurred since the previous report to the Council was issued in July 2015. With the signing of the Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (Peace Agreement) in August 2015, the United Nations system has made efforts to support the implementation of the Peace Agreement. The United Nations system has enhanced its coordination to increase development efforts to bridge the humanitarian-development divide by bringing together all actors in order to reinforce complementarity, coherence and sustainable solutions and mitigate the

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impact of the conflict going forward. With the return of the opposition leader and first Vice-President, Riek Machar, to Juba on 26 April 2016 and the formation of the Transitional Government of National Unity, that strategy will continue.

II. Context

4. The present report highlights the shift from an emergency humanitarian aid posture that attempts to address the most urgent and immediate needs to a long-term development posture. While much of that long-term development vision has yet to be translated into action, the focus of the international community's effort is to support the implementation of the Peace Agreement and consolidate political achievements in order to lay the foundation for a long-term partnership with the Government and achieve long-term sustainable peace and development.

5. It is important to note that during the entire reporting period there was a level 3 ("L3") emergency[1] in effect and interventions were consequently very much focused on humanitarian needs. The L3 designation enabled a marked increase in the number of humanitarian partners delivering projects under the Humanitarian Response Plan. The Interim Cooperation Framework, the programme document that will guide the development programming of the United Nations, was finalized in the final months of the reporting period, and progress against outcomes for the first quarter of 2016 are not yet available. The efforts of the United Nations system in South Sudan during the reporting period were directed towards increasing efforts to bridge the humanitarian-development divide. In essence, through better coordination, clear division of labour and a mutually reinforcing approach, the United Nations country team will work better to address the needs of South Sudan.

6. South Sudan continues to face tremendous economic, social and political challenges. Fighting between the Sudan People's Liberation Army, the Sudan People's Liberation Army in Opposition and affiliated militia groups continued throughout 2015 and into the first half of 2016, which has continued to cause mass displacement and significant loss of life, increase the proliferation of explosive hazards and cause damage to infrastructure with various degrees of intensity and spread, despite a Peace Agreement being put in place.

7. Given the magnitude of the unprecedented humanitarian catastrophe caused by the conflict, its consequences shall linger long after the conflict is over. The multidimensional challenges of localized armed conflict, displacement, intercommunal violence, economic hardship, climatic shocks, human rights violations and disease have magnified the suffering of the population across the board. An estimated 6.1 million people across South Sudan are in need of humanitarian assistance as a result of multiple and interlocking threats. Specifically, the conflict has had a devastating effect on the most vulnerable, particularly women, children and the elderly, and including the most vulnerable persons in host communities who are generally not the recipients of aid and whose resilience is waning, such as young persons, children and persons with disabilities. Despite the tranquillity in some areas of the country, the overall situation remains fragile. The

[1] A level 3 emergency is the global humanitarian system's classification for the response to the most severe large-scale humanitarian crises. It allows for increased capacity to respond to the worsening humanitarian crisis.

possibility of relapse into violent conflict is real, and the extent of the population's vulnerability has not fundamentally diminished.

8. Nearly 8 million people live in counties where the presence of landmines and explosive remnants of war threatens their safety and livelihood on a daily basis. During the reporting period, 16 accidents killed or maimed 50 people, predominantly children. The majority of accidents in the current reporting period resulted from unexploded ordnance and not landmines. While an anti-personnel mine is designed to kill or maim one person, an unexploded ordnance has a greater blast radius. Notwithstanding the progress made in the clearance of landmines and explosive remnants of war, a large number of hazards that were previously unknown have been recorded. From July 2015 to April 2016, 1,265 hazardous areas were surveyed and cleared, and a further 1,392 were recorded. The conflict's explosive legacy (mined roads and contaminated airstrips and water points) precludes the delivery of vital humanitarian aid, prevents socioeconomic development and inhibits freedom of movement.

9. To highlight the most immediate needs of the population as a result of the conflict, it is important to emphasize the sizeable death toll, widespread destruction of vital infrastructure and displacement of 2.4 million people in South Sudan, of whom 1.69 million are internally displaced persons and 704,168, in March 2016, were refugees in neighbouring countries. After more than two years of conflict and economic decline, coping mechanisms are exhausted and the hunger gap is growing. The latest Integrated Food Security Phase Classification update indicates that 2.8 million people, or nearly 25 per cent of the country's population, remain in urgent need of food assistance, and at least 40,000 people are on the brink of catastrophe. Apart from food and nutrition assistance, the vulnerable population continues to have multiple urgent needs, including provision of health care, access to information, education, psychosocial support and water, hygiene and sanitation, and other basic services and economic sustenance initiatives. More than 16,000 children are estimated to be recruited by armed forces in South Sudan. More than 10,000 children have been registered as unaccompanied, separated or missing.

10. The vast geographical area of South Sudan, the extremely limited capacity of the national and local governments, and lack of access due to insecurity, the poor communication and information infrastructure and the weather magnify the challenges that the international community faces in providing humanitarian and development assistance. Given the aforementioned needs, the United Nations system, within the parameters of the 2016 Humanitarian Response Plan and the Interim Cooperation Framework 2016-2017, are working together to provide life-saving development and humanitarian assistance and protection to the vulnerable population under very difficult and challenging conditions. In 2015, humanitarians reached more than 4.5 million people across South Sudan with vital aid and protection, including in some of the most remote locations.

11. In 2016, the Interim Cooperation Framework is expected to guide the United Nations system in strengthening the resilience of communities, enhancing social services for the most vulnerable, investing in peace and governance and supporting local economies. The United Nations also aims to respond to the most life-threating needs of 5.1 million people, including 300,000 returnees. That commitment is based on the assumption that the peace process moves forward and the Transitional Government of National Unity becomes durable. An additional assumption is that

regional and localized hostilities will subside, enabling freedom of movement and allowing for the facilitation of a process of voluntary returns. Equally important will be the task of addressing long-term development needs, once the immediate humanitarian needs are met, through community dialogue, reconciliation and addressing some of the root causes of conflict with a view to sustaining returns and reintegration, promoting solutions and preventing relapse. Managing that transition with adequate donor support is vital.

12. The politically driven conflicts and resulting widespread violence have had a significant impact on the economy of South Sudan, which is currently at risk of collapse. Against the backdrop of the economic conditions that prevailed in 2015, the economic outlook in South Sudan for 2016 is another challenge for the country. The exponential rise in inflation is directly affecting people's real purchasing power and thus having a negative impact on their welfare. While inflationary pressures resulted in an overall increase in prices in 2015, in January 2016 annualized inflation was estimated at 165 per cent (World Food Programme South Sudan market price monitoring bulletin). That sharp increase in the cost of living has put additional pressures on households already suffering from chronic low income and lack of employment opportunities. In response to the inflationary spiral, the Government has switched from a fixed to a floating exchange rate with the hope of introducing some stability and narrowing the gap between the black market and official exchange rates. However, that policy has had the opposite effect, as there is now higher demand for scarce United States dollars. As at 27 April 2016, the rate of exchange against the United States dollar was 27 South Sudanese pounds, compared with 21 South Sudanese pounds in January 2016. The devaluation of the South Sudanese pound combined with inadequate inflows of development assistance have reduced government revenues, depleted reserves, increased current and capital account deficits and caused the public debt to balloon. Such factors fundamentally affect the public's standard of living and create a higher propensity for further competition over resources with an intertribal conflict dimension, higher levels of criminality and further compromise of the overall societal security.

13. South Sudan received a delegation from the International Monetary Fund during the last week of March 2016. Analysis suggests that South Sudan may experience zero net oil revenue in 2016 if it is to meet its obligation to the Sudan. Furthermore, government expenditures are projected to rise owing to the absorption of the opposition forces into the official establishment and the potential for a wage increase. The additional requirements dictated by the proposal to establish 28 states would also exponentially increase expenditures. While efforts are under way to postpone paying the Sudan from the oil revenues, no breakthrough on that front has been reported. All in all, South Sudan may be stuck between an orderly and a disorderly economic collapse. Tough and painful decisions that entail fiscal and monetary discipline will have to be made before convincing various actors to step in and assist.

III. Impact of the conflict on development

14. In 2015, the United Nations continued its attempt to balance meeting the most urgent humanitarian needs and reinitiating work on long-term development prospects. Although donor funding has been tilted towards humanitarian response, the signing of the Peace Agreement and recent political developments, including the

formation of the Transitional Government of National Unity, bodes well for scaling up development interventions. Many United Nations actors have begun to factor in possible development initiatives into their plans, especially those stipulated by various chapters of the Peace Agreement.

15. It is noteworthy that a shift in appetite towards prospects for long-term development is slowly taking place in tandem with the humanitarian response that resulted from the crisis of 2013. Donors were keen on meeting the most urgent humanitarian needs but cautious to invest in long-term development plans in the middle of the conflict. That reluctance had been exacerbated by the delays in the implementation of the Peace Agreement and the formation of the Transitional Government of National Unity, putting together a new country development plan and the conclusion of the transitional security arrangements. Given the appropriations cycle of various donors and the legislative processes associated with such appropriations, in addition to the need for favourable conditions to launch a serious partnership with the Government on development, more delays in relaunching the development effort could be expected.

IV. United Nations support to South Sudan

16. Despite the signing of the Peace Agreement in August 2015, sporadic fighting continues to be reported, resulting in further displacement of civilians both internally and into neighbouring countries, with all the associated consequences. In November and December 2015 alone, for the first time in Western Equatoria a reported outflow of South Sudanese to both the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic was witnessed. Preventable diseases continued to spread, causing illness and death. Malaria was the top cause of morbidity reported among internally displaced persons.

17. In 2015, human rights violation increased to unprecedented levels, and the country found its way into the global impunity index rating as the second worst in Africa and fifth globally on media violations, following the killing of seven journalists in one year, compounded by a sharp decline in the press freedom rating (from 119 in 2014 to 140 in 2016). To address that challenge, United Nations partners joined efforts in implementing the United Nations Plan of Action on the Safety of Journalists and the Issue of Impunity. To help to address the issue of impunity, United Nations partners also scaled up both human and technical capacity-building for journalists and media houses, including through the establishment and strengthening of community media platforms to provide a two-way communication channel between the affected communities, their leaders and humanitarian and development actors.

18. From 1 July 2015 to 31 March 2016, 1,265 hazardous areas containing 749 mines and 16,277 pieces of unexploded ordnance were cleared, which released 25,093,119 m^2 of land. Mine risk education provided 49,809 women, 54,137 men and 160,321 children with the skills to mitigate the threat posed by explosive hazards. Despite the dangerous and difficult operational environment, the United Nations and its partners delivered life-saving assistance to more than 4.5 million people across the country from January to December 2015, including in some of the most remote locations. Assistance included the delivery of food aid to more than 1 million people. Nearly 140,000 children were treated for malnutrition, and about

440,000 benefited from "Education in emergencies" programmes. More than 240,000 children under age 5 received measles vaccinations, 343,000 households were reached with emergency livelihoods and 150,000 people received survival kits containing basic household items. More than 2.5 million people had timely access to safe water. Almost 30,000 pieces of unexploded ordnance were cleared, [2] and 5 million animals were vaccinated or treated.

19. Insecurity, active hostilities, harassment and threats against aid workers, looting of supplies and misuse of humanitarian assets remained a defining feature of the operating environment. During the resumption of fighting in Unity early in October 2015, humanitarian compounds were looted and aid workers were threatened, forcing humanitarian partners to relocate their staff. At least 52 aid workers have been killed since December 2013, and many more are missing. In Juba, the increase in criminality had an increasing impact on humanitarian operations due to loss of assets and threats to staff. More recently, in February 2016, as a result of the outbreak of hostilities at the protection of civilians site in Malakal, at least 25 internally displaced persons were reportedly killed and more than 120 others were injured. Furthermore, 3,700 family shelters and 2,300 individual shelters were destroyed or damaged during the fighting and ensuing fires, as were multiple humanitarian facilities, including clinics, water tankers, nutrition centres and schools. During the fighting, about 26,000 of the internally displaced persons fled inside the base of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, while around 4,000 internally displaced persons fled from the protection of civilians site to Malakal town, where they are staying in public buildings and abandoned houses.

20. The United Nations and its partners immediately scaled up their operations in response. Water provision was a priority, since the damage to the infrastructure disabled existing water distribution points, as was food distribution. Given the need to restore sanitation, and in order to prevent the spread of various diseases, open defecation areas were cleaned and new latrines commissioned. Furthermore, a temporary health clinic and a child help desk were established, which enabled the early reunification of children with their parents. By the time those were fully functional, 53 children had already been reunited with their families. A confidential space for victims of gender-based violence was set up, and gender-based violence case workers provided individual case management and various forms of support, as required.

V. Prospects and recommendations

21. **The events observed in South Sudan and the sum of challenges faced by the international community between July 2015 and April 2016 are a real testimony to the difficulties in the road ahead. What the United Nations family collectively encountered in terms of the number of challenges faced, the size of the population served, the obstacles that had to be overcome and the signs of a possible regression all indicate the need for renewed long-term commitment to South Sudan. While the United Nations family, along with international actors, strives to maximize its impact and synergies, it is noted that efficiency and**

[2] Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Humanitarian Bulletin: South Sudan, Issue 5 (April 2016). Available from http://reliefweb.int/report/south-sudan/south-sudan-humanitarian-bulletin-issue-5-16-april-2016.

effectiveness are functions of the operating environment, and all stakeholders are collectively striving to improve their response and adapt to or overcome daily operational challenges.

22. Looking ahead, a number of prerequisites need to be met to lay the foundation for long-term sustainable development in South Sudan. The political process needs to move forward in all its aspects, including the establishment of the basic State institutions that will facilitate the work of the international community and be part of the overall sustainable development effort. Development should be a South Sudan-led process. Political will is needed on the part of the Transitional Government of National Unity to enable the United Nations and its partners to perform their mandates and is fundamental to the success of future efforts. Initiatives to bring about reconciliation and development must be launched at the local level following a bottom-up approach, given the challenges associated with the process at the national level. The Government, in an effort to prove its credibility at the national level, must swiftly address such issues as impunity and hold accountable all those responsible for crimes in order to try to restore social cohesion and undo the long-term damage to the social fabric of South Sudan.

23. The Government of South Sudan is encouraged to devote attention to addressing the high level of impunity and provide the needed safety and security of its citizens. Corruption and mismanagement of resources should also be addressed as a matter of urgency to reassure citizens and development partners that solid monitoring and evaluation mechanisms embedded within State institutions and structures are a priority.

24. Fiscal and monetary policy reforms and building the capacity of the State's economic institutions will facilitate long-term economic stability. Erratic spending patterns and ad hoc monetary policy decisions can compromise the confidence of both the local population and international donors in the economy. That in and of itself will have a negative impact on investment capital inflow.

25. Public sector management is an issue that is addressed in the context of implementing the Peace Agreement. However, building successful local capacity, with the help of the international community, can be achieved only if there is political will to do so above and beyond political, tribal and ethnic considerations. The same applies to the military establishment and law enforcement institutions.

26. An adequate level of support to the international community's efforts to address the challenges in South Sudan will need to be secured. Such support refers to both development and humanitarian needs and must be sustained to the extent possible in order to provide the needed stability of response amid the current period of uncertainty. The shortfalls in funding that various United Nations agencies, funds and programmes are experiencing, coupled with the current low appetite for providing resources for development, create an added risk. It is hoped that political progress will positively affect the potential commitment of a sustained and predictable funding response in South Sudan, as an ad hoc and partial approach to resolving long-term problems in South Sudan will provide minimal impact.

27. To face and overcome challenges in 2016, a multidimensional approach that encompasses peace and reconciliation, humanitarian action and development will need to be followed. Clear benchmarks will help to guide the parallel tracks of humanitarian action and development. In addition, and as indicated in the previous report, leveraging different funding streams to address short- and long-term development needs and assessing the viability of flexible financing models will be required. Over the past year, the challenges faced by the United Nations in South Sudan have been immense. The United Nations has experienced significant setbacks and has had to operate in an environment characterized predominantly by emergency response. However, the determination and commitment of the United Nations family to simultaneously address the enormous humanitarian needs that the country faces and promote the longer-term development agenda will continue in 2016.

28. The political leadership of South Sudan urgently needs to hasten the implementation of the Peace Agreement and pave the way for an environment conducive to political and economic reforms and that will spur accelerated development.